

dinavian machines. In some of these bags the soil may have come from farther afield still, and maybe in time exotic plants will spring from that particular part of the aerodrome.

British Continental Airways have had heavy bookings on the Le Zoute run, and a D.H.86 has been transferred from the Stockholm route to help with the extra traffic. Capt. Hattersley has left Croydon for Liverpool, where he has started operating the Liverpool-Doncaster-Amsterdam route for B.C.A., this company having taken over the route by agreement with K.L.M.

Remarkable enterprise has been shown in the passengers' wash and brush-up accommodation at the airport, for the towels actually bear the initials E.R. Whether these have been in store since King Edward VII's reign, or even since Edward I's, is not known, but no mortal passenger can wipe his hand on them because they are highly glazed sail cloth, impervious to water. At a place

like this there should be real soap (not globes full of frothing water), as well as nail-brushes, hair and clothes brushes, and really hot water—none of which exist. The authorities say that the staff remove these things, but the answer is simple. A big airport should have accommodation equal to that of a good hotel, which includes an attendant who, incidentally, could live largely on tips from grateful passengers accustomed only to nasty cuts on the fingers from prison-type towels made of starched oakum.

By the way, "Richard Carveth's" article on the railway clearing house scandal—and the leading article in the same issue of *Flight*—seem to have stirred things up. Half a dozen daily and Sunday newspapers have since commented on the absurd attitude of the railway people towards British air traffic companies. It was what was wanted because the public did not know about the situation—a state of affairs which suited the Brer Rabbit tactics of the railroad kings to perfection. A. VIATOR.

### 3,370 Passengers a Month

DURING July no fewer than 3,370 passengers were carried by K. L. M. to and from London, an average of between fifty and sixty a day in each direction. The separate figures were: Outgoing, 1,670 and incoming, 1,700.

### Ceylon Still Waits

CEYLON may have to wait at least for a year before an air service, linking the island with the mainland, is inaugurated. Although the aerodrome at Colombo, recently enlarged and arranged with suitable runways, is almost complete, the new Empire air mail scheme may hinder the opening of the Indo-Ceylon service until the details of the scheme have been worked out.

### West African Possibilities

READERS will recall that in last week's issue of *Flight* there appeared an article describing a 14,000-mile tour of West Africa, carried out on behalf of the Shell Company by Mr. W. K. Brett, flying a Percival Gull. An additional extract from Mr. Brett's report to the Company is worthy of quotation in these columns, as it neatly sums up the progress and prospects of commercial aviation in that area. The tour was made between October, 1935, and April, 1936.

Aviation in general in West Africa (writes Mr. Brett) is in a very much less advanced state than in East Africa. While in most towns of any size in British colonies on the east coast aero clubs have been formed (and for the most part are exceedingly well supported, encouraging many people to buy and operate light aircraft both for business purposes and for pleasure), in West Africa this is not so. At Brazzaville, in the French Congo, and at Duala, in the French Cameroons, are the only clubs in the part of West Africa which I visited. Each of these owns one machine only.

As regards regular airlines, a great deal more attention has been paid to their promotion and organisation in French and Belgian territory (where the natural difficulties and the fact that attention was concentrated on the eastern side of Africa have delayed their opening) than in the British colonies of West Africa. A good meteorological service has been established, and a great deal of thought and work has been expended on the provision of emergency landing-grounds.

In Dahomey, French Niger and the other colonies of French Equatorial and West Africa, emergency landing-grounds have been made following nearly all main roads, at an average interval of 30 km. On the main airline routes and where no roads exist the emergency landing-grounds follow some well-defined geographical feature, such as a river or a line of lakes.

The French and Belgian services from Europe to the Congo have been operated successfully for two years now, and Sabena holds a remarkably good record over a period of ten years.

In Nigeria, with the advent of the new Imperial Airways' West Africa service, the work involved in organisation has promoted a very great interest both in administrative and commercial circles. This colony, having delayed for so many years to provide any facilities for aircraft because no services were in sight, is now going ahead with great rapidity, and is producing a chain of excellent landing-grounds following Imperial Airways' proposed route to Lagos.

### The Croydon Disaster

THE fact that the machine was being used only on experimental service slightly reduces the seriousness of the accident near Croydon airport on Monday morning. The machine, a Vickers Velox, came down from unknown causes almost immediately after leaving the airport at 2 a.m. and caught fire. The two pilots, one of whom had only recently obtained his first-class navigators' licence, and the two radio operators lost their lives; there was no mail or freight on board.

FOR TRUNK ROUTES. Douglas DC-3 monoplanes have been ordered by American Airlines, United Airlines, K.L.M. and T.W.A. For night operation, when the machine is usually known as the D.S.T. (Douglas Sleeper Transport), sleeping accommodation for up to fourteen passengers is provided. By day there are seats for twenty-four. The new Wright Cyclone Model G or the Pratt and Whitney Twin Wasp engines are variously specified. With Cyclone G2s, which are supercharged to give 850 h.p. at 5,800 feet the maximum speed is 213 m.p.h. The cruising speed at 10,000 ft. is 180 m.p.h. Structurally the machine is similar to the well-established D.C.2. Externally it may be distinguished from that machine by forward continuation of the fin.

